

# Louisiana Department of Wildlife and Fisheries Natural Heritage Program

## Polygala hookeri Torr. & Gray Hooker's Milkwort

**Identification:** Plant 1-3 dm in height, stem glabrous. Leaves, at least at some nodes, in whorls. Racemes loosely flowered, obconical apically, to 6 cm long fully developed, their stalks 1-3 (-6) cm long. Bracts ovate, short-acuminate apically, about 1 mm long. Flowers lavender or similar variant, their stalks 2 mm long. Petaloid sepals somewhat dilated on each side basally (subhastate), oblongish above the base, acuminate apically, 3 mm long. Seed oblong-obovate, black, plump, sparsely short-pubescent, 1 mm long, the aril with its 2 elongate lobes appressed against one side for nearly its full length.

### **Key ID characters:**

- · At least some of the leaves in whorls.
- · Racemes loosely flowered, obconical apically.
- · Flowers lavender in color.
- · Seeds black, plump, and with an aril.

Habitat: Pine savannas and flatwoods.

**Taxonomic Comments:** This species is a member of the family Polygalaceae. There are 16 species of the genus *Polygala* known to occur in LA.

#### Status:

Wetland: FACW+ - Facultative Wetland

Global: G3 - Vulnerable

State: S1 - Critically Imperiled



Longleaf Pine Savannah

Range: Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas.

### Soils:

**Similar Species:** This species is most similar to *P. cruciata* in general features, especially because of habit, leaf orientation, and flower color. However, *P. cruciata* has compact racemes that are ovate to oblong apically and the plant is usually more robust.







P. cruciata, Photo by L. Urbatsch

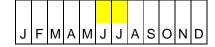
P. polygama

Reason for Rarity: Habitat loss and fire exclusion.

**Known Distribution in Louisiana:** St Tammany

**Dates of Natural Heritage Program Observations:** 1978, 1991, 1997

## **Best Time for Viewing this Species:**





Distribution in Louisiana

#### References:

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